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29 May 1956

AQUATONE OPERATIONAL PLANS

1. In the light of the discussion of AQUATONE and related matters on 28 May, we have reviewed operational plans and possibilities in consultation with the Air Force. The following facts and considerations have a major bearing on our conclusions:

a. Work is going forward as rapidly as possible to prepare facilities in Turkey but these cannot be ready much before 1 August. Operations could be initiated in Germany by 15 June.

b. The six weeks from mid-June to late July that can be gained by starting operations in Germany are of especial importance because the weather is at its best and the days are longest at that time of the year. Operations over all target areas can be conducted more frequently and more productively in June and July than during the autumn and winter. These months acquire added importance from the fact that operations can be usefully conducted over northern target areas only during the summer months.

c. A second unit will be ready for deployment overseas early in August and facilities should be ready to receive it. There would not be room for both units at Adana, Turkey. In any event it is desirable to base operations at two or more locations so as to secure maximum coverage and to preserve our flexibility in the face of changing political circumstances.

d. Providing reasonably good security can be maintained locally, the appearance of our equipment at a German base should involve no greater risk of compromise than its appearance [REDACTED] Its operation at several locations in Europe should if anything strengthen the cover story that is being used.

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e. We are actively planning for operations in the Far East and expect shortly to select a base and move forward with the preparation of any necessary specialized facilities. Approximately four-fifths of our intelligence targets are accessible from Europe rather than from the Far East, however, and the Far Eastern targets have been, or can more readily be, covered by other means. It is for this reason that we propose to use the first two units in Europe and the third in the Far East.

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TOP SECRET

-2-

2. On the basis of the above considerations we propose to proceed as follows:

a. We are making preparations to start operations from Germany if possible by 15 June.

b. Initially we will limit ourselves to shallow penetrations. These will cover either the satellites or territory within gliding range (175 miles) of ~~a neutral or friendly~~ border of the USSR.

c. After a few such missions have been flown, we will, if all goes well, seek permission to undertake the longer range missions for which our equipment is designed.

d. In the meanwhile, prior to the conduct of any missions over hostile territory, we will inform Chancellor Adenauer of our plan. We will not specifically ask his approval in order to avoid placing an unwelcome responsibility upon him. If, however, he raises any objection or expresses a fear that these operations might prove embarrassing to him, we will hold up operations over unfriendly territory pending further consultation.

e. Depending upon the Chancellor's reaction, we will either plan to continue operations from Germany for the life of the project (as we hope) or operate only temporarily from Germany until facilities can be made ready in other locations.

3. The above conclusions are agreed as between the USAF and the CIA.

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